

WHAT

by Dr. Gregory J. Wych



Do I NEED TO KNOW
About Getting My Mercury Fillings

REMOVED?

Everybody should worry about possible mercury exposure that can result from the way most dentists just grind out old mercury fillings. Much of the time, a new amalgam filling goes back in place of the old one. The dental establishment claims that mercury fillings are a stable material that emits little or no mercury, but then turns around and blames the mercury-free dentists for “unnecessarily exposing patients to excess mercury” when removing amalgams electively. Well, which is it? Stable, or mercury emitting?

We know beyond any doubt that amalgam emits mercury. Cutting the amalgam with a dental bur produces very small particles with vastly increased surface area, and vastly increased potential for subjecting the people present to mercury exposure. In fact, in a recently published experiment, volunteers with no amalgam fillings swallowed capsules of milled amalgam particles and, sure enough, their blood mercury levels increased! These authors concluded that “the GI uptake of mercury from amalgam particles is of quantitative importance.”

Less well studied than mercury vapor is the problem of amalgam particulates. Taking out fillings with a high-speed dental bur generates a cloud of particles, at least 65 percent of which are one micron or less in size. These are fully respirable and get deep into the lungs, where the microscopic particles are broken down and the mercury is systemically absorbed within a few days. This mercury exposure can be as much as a hundred times greater than that from the vapor! Stories abound concerning patients having adverse reactions—getting sick—following removal of mercury fillings.

Rubber Dam or No Rubber Dam?

Some dentists hate rubber dams, while the International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology (IAOMT) member dentists can't live without them. Reduced exposure amalgam removal can be done either way, but the rubber dam will help contain the majority of the debris of amal-

gam grinding, among its many other benefits. Studies have shown that the use of a rubber dam eliminates the spike in plasma mercury one day after amalgam removal, as well as the spike in urine mercury 10 days afterward—evidence of its protective benefit. Of course, both amalgam removal groups, dam or no dam, showed 50 to 75 percent reduction in mercury levels a year later!

Chunk or Grind?

The IAOMT recommends that the mercury fillings be removed in big chunks, and not by just grinding them out. Removal slowly with big chunks greatly reduces the amount of mercury that can be breathed in by the patient, dentist and assistant. Asking your dentist about his or her technique for removal of mercury fillings is the only way to know if he or she follows the IAOMT guidelines.

Many wholistic practitioners recommend removing only two or three fillings at a time to reduce mercury exposure. If the fillings are all in the same portion of the mouth, and will all get “numb” at the same time, then removing those fillings seem to be the best idea. Any more than removing a few fillings at a time increases the risk of mercury toxicity for the patient.

Supplement or Not?

Some patients want to know if they should take any medication or supplements prior or during amalgam removal. While the IAOMT makes no suggestion either way, many alternative medicine physicians support the idea of vitamin C supplementation prior to amalgam removal, and detoxification immediately after amalgam removal. A typical detoxification program might include charcoal the day of and after the removal, followed by organ detoxification such as:

- Liver and gall bladder cleanse: dandelion root, cinnamon bark, liquorice, juniper berries, cardamom, bearberry leaf, cloves, ginger, milk thistle, Oregon

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grape root, Swedish bitters and colloidal silver. Freshly squeezed organic orange juice precedes the cleanse each morning;

- Kidney cleanse (preceded by fresh organic lemon juice): corn silk, bearberry leaf, dandelion, horsetail, burdock root, goldenrod, juniper berries and colloidal silver;
- Blood cleanse: red clover, chapparal, garlic, burdock root, gotu kola, cayenne, echinacea, cat's claw, ginkgo biloba, horsetail, poke root and colloidal silver;
- Brain tonic: ginkgo biloba, gotu kola, calamus root, rosemary, kola nut, cayenne and colloidal silver.

All these herbs help to cleanse the systems of the body while aiding the healing process. These cleansing tonics should ideally be taken in rotation throughout the year to cleanse the body of pollutants as well as poisons such as mercury. The courses last two to four weeks. Talking to your alternative medicine physician is the best way to decide the best course of treatment for yourself. Again, the IAOMT makes no suggestions concerning supplementation.

There is little doubt that safe removal of mercury filings can improve your health, as long as certain guidelines are followed. Ask your dentist, or look for dentists committed to the IAOMT guidelines for help.

For more info, contact Gregory J. Wych, DDS, 7505 St. Andrews Rd, Irmo, 803-781-1600, GregoryWych.com. See ad, page 14.

ecotip

Green Greetings

The Medium Is the Message
with Holiday Cards

Even with the advent of email, texting, smart phones and animated web greetings, the traditional paper holiday greeting card, wishing recipients a "Merry Christmas," "Happy Hanukkah" or simply "Happy Holidays," still holds a place in our hearts as a way to send, receive, display and even file forever a treasured memento. *RawPeople.com* reports that 300,000 trees are consumed each year in the making of some 2 billion holiday cards, but appealing alternatives are coming to the rescue.

Purchasing cards made of recycled paper is the easiest way to save some lumber. Look for a local card retailer that is big on labels signifying use of 100 percent recycled content, post-consumer waste and vegetable inks. More unusual options include tree-free paper made from sugarcane and plantable cards with embedded seeds.

Nonprofit and conservation-oriented organizations can fill in the gaps. *CardsThatGive.com* (Tinyurl.com/3arz7ms) works with scores of them and offers online visitors a legend of icons that explains the environmental and charitable benefits of each one.

The Sierra Club (Tinyurl.com/3wven48), America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization, offers holiday designs printed in the United States with soy-based inks on recycled paper. The Greenpeace Natural Collection (Tinyurl.com/4xwabus) also offers eco-friendly cards.

To reduce a card's carbon footprint to the bare minimum, with the only transport required that expended by the post office to deliver it, make it yourself. One option is to take old received cards, creatively paint over the original addressee's name and reuse it. No envelope? Just write on the back of the clean front panel and cut it off to create a holiday postcard.

Sites such as *CraftStylish.com* (Tinyurl.com/dng4z5) offer attractive suggestions for making original greeting cards from recycled materials. All that's needed are a few household items like paper bags, pencil, pen, ruler, tape, glue and crayons; professional art supplies are not required. Fun stamping dies can be fashioned from a potato. Even sewing skills can come into play to craft one-of-a-kind cards that will be warmly received and cherished for years to come.

Source: Adapted from *GreenPromise.com*.